The Providential Diviſion of Men into Rich *and* Poor, *and the reſpective Duties thence ariſing, briefly conſider'd*

18

IN A

SERMON

Preach'd in the Pariſh-Church of

St. *SEPULCHRES*,

MAY 27. 1708.

Being *THURSDAY* in *Whitſon*-Week:

AT THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

OF THE

Chief Promoters of the CHARITY SCHOOLS; together with the Maſters and Miſtreſſes of the ſaid SCHOOLS; and the Children there Educated, to the Number of Three Thouſand, and upwards.

Publiſh'd at the Requeſt of ſeveral Gentlemen concern'd in this Charity.

By *ROBERT MOSS*, D.D. Chaplain in Ordinary to Her MAJESTY, and Preacher to the Honourable Society of *Grays-Inn.*

LONDON: Printed for *Richard Sare* at *Grays-Inn* Gate in *Holborn*; and *Jacob Tonſon* at *Grays-Inn* Gate next *Grays-Inn* Lane. 1708.

Price One Penny.

Sach. 382/1

BL

PROV. XXII. 2.

The Rich and Poor meet together; the Lord is the Maker of them all.

THE obvious Meaning of this Proverbial Speech is, that *the Rich and Poor* are mingled, or rather aſſociated together as Members of the ſame Community; under very different Circumſtances indeed, as to their outward Appearance and Condition; but with a manifeſt Equality as to their Nature and Origine: For *the Lord is the Maker of them all. All men are from the ground, and Adam was created of Earth: in much knowledge the Lord hath divided them, and made their ways diverſe.* The ſame God is both the Author of their Being, and the Diſpoſer of their Fortunes: As he maketh them *Men*, ſo he alſo *maketh Poor, and maketh Rich, he bringeth low, and lifteth up*; the one is the Effect of his creating Power, the other the Allotment of his governing Providence. For, according to the Pſalmiſt's Calculation, (who was wiſer in this Point than any Aſtrologer) *Promotion cometh neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South*; 'It depends not upon the Poſition of the Hea-'vens, nor the Influence of the Stars, nor any ſuch imaginary Cauſe: *But God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and ſetteth up another.*

Eccleſiaſtic. 33. 10, 11.

1 Sam. 2. 8.

Pſal. 75. 6, 7.

This I take to be the true Purport of the Doctrine contain'd in the Text, which is too plain to ſtand in need of farther Proof or Illuſtration.

My Buſineſs ſhall be

Firſt, To raiſe ſome general Obſervations from hence, conducing to Chriſtian Knowledge and Practice.

Secondly, To point in particular at the Reſpective Duty both of the *Rich and Poor*: Firſt towards God as their common Creator; then towards each other as Fellow-Creatures.

Thirdly, To make an Application pertinent to the preſent Occaſion of our *meeting together* in the Houſe of God.

The Rich and Poor meet together: the Lord is the Maker of them all.

I. And the firſt thing I would obſerve from hence is, that, as God is the *Maker* of all Men, *High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another*, ſo it is to be ſuppos'd, that

Pſal. 49. 2.

he hath made Proviſion ſufficient for the Happineſs of them *All*.

The very Notion of God as a Creator makes this Suppoſition clear and inconteſtable. For, as God is in Nature infinitely Good, ſo there is nothing, that we can conceive, could determine him to create this World, and people it with Mankind, but the free Motions of his own communicative Goodneſs. This is ſo diſcernable by the meer Light of Reaſon, that the * Philoſophers, when they are upon the Enquiry what ſhould be the impulſive Cauſe or Reaſon of God's making the World, without Heſitation, ſolve the Problem by DIVINE GOODNESS.

* *Quæris quid ſit propoſitum Deo? Bonitas. Ita certe Plato ait. Quæ Deo faciendi Mundum cauſa fuit? Bonus eſt, bono nulla cujuſquam boni invidia eſt.* Seneca, Ep. 65.

And if Goodneſs was the pure Motive, that induc'd God to communicate Exiſtence to Mankind, to furniſh them with the Neceſſaries and Conveniencies of this Life, and to endow them with noble Faculties, that ſeem to look beyond this Life, and make them capable of higher Enjoyments; then may we certainly conclude, that the good God deſign'd the general Good and Happineſs of theſe his Creatures in creating and arranging them as he did; and that he provided *ſufficiently* for the Good and Happineſs of them *All*, becauſe the Deſign was conducted by infinite Wiſdom as well as Goodneſs.

And whatever Diverſity may appear in Mens outward Circumſtances, how unequal ſoever the Diſtribution of God's common Gifts may ſeem, we muſt ſtill conclude, that there is a competent Proviſion made for the Happineſs of *All*, becauſe God

Job. 34. 19. cannot be ſuſpected of Partiality to *Any*: —— *He regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor; for they are All the work of his hands.* And it can never be imagin'd, that he ſhould make any of them on purpoſe to be Miſerable, or for any other End indeed than to be Happy. Far be it from us, O Lord, to entertain any ſuch harſh or impious Thought of thee! *For thou loveſt all the things that are, and abhorreſt nothing which thou haſt made: for never wouldeſt thou have made any thing, if thou hadſt hated it*; as we have it very appoſitely expreſs'd in the Book of Wiſdom, *chap.* 12. *v.* 24.

And this is the firſt Obſervation I thought proper to make from the Text, to lay the better Foundation for that Reverence, Submiſſiveneſs, and Thankfulneſs, which is univerſally due to our Beneficent Creator.

II. It is to be obſerv'd farther, that, tho' God muſt be ſuppos'd to have provided ſufficiently for the Happineſs of *all* Men, as he is the Maker of them *All*, yet are there wiſe and good Reaſons notwithſtanding for the promiſcuous Diſpenſation of Good and Evil in this World: Nor is it to be expected that All ſhould be happy, or Any compleatly happy here.

It

It is apparent in Fact, if *we look into all the works of the moſt High*, that *there are two and two, one againſt another*: the Rich againſt the Poor, and Proſperity againſt Adverſity. Eccleſiaſtic. 33. 15.

And we muſt acknowledge Things to be well and wiſely thus order'd, both upon a Natural and a Moral Account.

Upon a Natural Account firſt, becauſe there could be no Government without Subordination. And if, by the Diſpoſition of Providence, all Men had been made as equal in Fortune and Condition, as they are in Nature, it would have been an eternal Diſpute, who ſhould obey and who ſhould govern: And it had been hardly poſſible to bring things, upon ſuch a *Baſis*, to any tolerable Order, or perfect Settlement. Whereas that Diſparity of Circumſtances betwixt Man and Man, which God in Wiſdom hath appointed, ſerves to induce ſuch as are mean and needy, willingly to reſign the Power to them, who already enjoy the Advantages of Birth and Fortune: And it is no leſs an Inducement to the Wealthy and Honourable, to cheriſh and protect the Poor, without the aſſiſtance of whoſe Hands, the moſt plentiful Condition would be ſo far from being happy or eaſie, that perhaps it would be the moſt anxious, and the moſt laborious. And God's provident Care is very remarkable, in making the Rich and Poor thus mutually needful and helpful to each other; that ſo they might be link'd together by the ſtrongeſt Ties of Intereſt, and Both ſufficiently encourag'd to act agreeably to the Station in which God hath placed them.

And this appears to be a very wiſe and good Adminiſtration likewiſe upon a Moral Account, becauſe that variety of Conditions, which is allotted to Men in the changeable Scene of this tranſitory World, affords room for the Trial and Improvement of various Virtues, which ſuit, ſome with one State of Life, and ſome with another. For Example, Poverty is the proper State to try Mens Faith, Patience, and Reſignation: And Plenty, to exerciſe their Humility, Charity, and Moderation: And the Changes and Chances by which they are frequently toſs'd from one Condition to the other, help to prove their Conſtancy and Firmneſs, to enlarge their Experience, and to convince them of the Emptineſs and Vanity of all Sublunary Things.

For in Truth, when all is done, tho' we cannot ſuppoſe God's Creation to be ſo defective, as that any thing ſhould be wanting to make Men happy, yet neither can we be ſo fond as to imagine that Man's true Happineſs ſhould conſiſt in the Affluence or Abundance of any thing that this Earth can furniſh.

Were it ſo, we ſhould not ſee one Man rolling in Eaſe and Plenty, whilſt another ſweats hard to live, or groans under pinching Neceſſity. No! we may depend upon it, all theſe things would be diſtributed with an even Hand, and in the exacteſt Proportion, if they were indeed Eſſential to our Happineſs: Or rather, the virtuous and godly Man would be ſure always to enjoy the moſt and

the choiceſt of all Temporal Bleſſings; the Juſtice
2 Cor. 1. 3. of a God that is the *Father of Mercies* would in no wiſe ſuffer him to paſs undiſtinguiſh'd.

But ſince 'tis notorious that Things are quite otherwiſe diſpos'd; that *all things* indeed *come alike to all*, and that *there*
Eccleſiaſt. 9. 2. *is one Event to the righteous and to the wicked*; and that ſo it muſt be without a conſtant Interpoſition of Miracles; we muſt of Neceſſity be convinc'd, that the Happineſs which is properly *Human* is not here to be expected: Becauſe no Man can be certain of poſſeſſing and enjoying that fancy'd Happineſs which this World affords, nor can the beſt of Men promiſe himſelf to be compleatly happy in a World, where the Good and Evil are ſo chequer'd each with other, that every Move a Man makes may produce a conſiderable Change in his Condition.

And this was an Obſervation uſeful to be made from the Text, partly to vindicate the Wiſdom of Divine Providence, and partly to teach us the true value of theſe earthly Things, and to put us upon ſeeking for ſomething more ſolid and durable. For,

III. It muſt be obſerv'd yet farther, that, ſince God hath undoubtedly made a ſufficient Proviſion for the Happineſs of *all* Men, and yet it does not appear that there is any ſuch ſuitable Proviſion made for them in this World, it muſt unavoidably follow, that there will be a future State of juſt Recompence and compleat Happineſs.

For if this Life were to ſet the Bounds to all our Expectations, and to put an End to our very Being, it would be a ſore Evil indeed, and the moſt remedileſs of all things that are done under the Sun, that the Good and Bad ſhould be ſo unequally involv'd in one Event; or that the one (as it often happens) ſhould ſuffer undeſervedly even for being Good, and the other flouriſh and triumph in his very Wickedneſs. This were a Management upon no Terms to be reconcil'd with the Juſtice, Wiſdom, or Goodneſs of that God who is the Maker and Governor of the World. But ſince we cannot entertain the leaſt doubt, but that Theſe are Perfections Eſſential to the Godhead, and always in Harmony with each other, we muſt as infallibly conclude, that there is to be a State of exact and adequate Retribution hereafter.

And though this be a Concluſion that hath all the Certainty and Clearneſs that Reaſon well could give it, yet leſt Men, *becauſe of the blindneſs of their Heart*, ſhould be in danger of loſing the comfortable ſight of it, God hath expreſly declar'd, that
Heb. 10. 34, 35. we *have a better and an enduring Subſtance, a great*
1 Pet. 1. 4. *Recompence of Reward, an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us.*

And,

And, this once mention'd, all the Difficulties are perfectly clear'd up concerning the promiſcuous Diſtribution of Good and Evil in this World. For ſince *here we have no continuing city, but ſeek for one to come, which hath Foundations, and whoſe builder and maker is God*, it matters not much what our preſent Condition is: For there are Manſions for the Poor as well as for the Rich in Heaven, and the Way thither is equally open to them Both; and during their Paſſage through this Mortal Life, they are Both upon their Probation, though in a Method ſomewhat different. And if they take care ſo to behave themſelves, as becomes that Dependance which they have upon God, and that Relation which they bear one to another, according as God hath rang'd and order'd them, they may *meet together* in Heaven at laſt, and be jointly poſſeſs'd of the Riches of that glorious Place, and the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.

Heb. 13. 14. & 10. 11.

And this was an Obſervation needful to be taken along with us, in order to give a right Determination to our Thoughts and Affections, and, by preſenting us with a true Proſpect both of our preſent and our future State, to teach and enable us ſo to paſs through things Temporal, as that finally we loſe not the things Eternal.

II. I proceed now to point more particularly at the reſpective Duty both of the *Poor* and *Rich*: Firſt towards God as their common Creator; and then towards each Other as Fellow-Creatures.

1. And firſt towards God as the Creator and Governor of all Things, it is the reſpective Duty of the *Poor*, quietly and patiently to acquieſce in the Sovereign Diſpoſals of his good Providence.

And this is a Duty plainly dictated by Natural Reaſon. For *Epictetus*, an Heathen, can tell us, " That we are but Actors of a certain part, which " the Maſter and Director of the *Drama* hath aſ- " ſign'd us; and that it belongs to us to act that Part well and " handſomly that falls to our Lot, even though it be that of a " Beggar, ſince the Choice is not in our Selves, but in Another.

Enchirid. Cap. 23.

But the Scripture carries the Point higher, and reſolves that Sovereign Dominion which God exerciſeth over us, into the Original Right of Creation, which ought not once to be diſputed or murmur'd againſt by any Creature. For *Wo unto him that ſtriveth with his Maker*: (ſaith the Prophet *Iſai.* 45. 9.) *Let the Potſherd ſtrive with the Potſherds of the Earth: Shall the Clay ſay to him that faſhioneth it, What makeſt thou?* And, if the Potter hath ſuch Power over the Clay, much more muſt the Power of God be allowed to be moſt abſolute, and his Judgment moſt certain and unerring, both in framing his Creatures, and carving out their Fortunes for them.

And therefore the pooreſt and the meaneſt Mortal that is, is bound, with all humble Submiſſion, to reſt contented with that

State or Condition in which it hath pleas'd God to rank him; always remembring, that he is in the Hands of a faithful Creator, who, though he hath made him, in the Eye of the World, but low and little, yet can and will notwithstanding (if it be not his own Fault) make him truly happy and glorious.

2. Another special Duty incumbent upon the *Poor*, with respect to their Lord and Maker, is a regular and religious Behaviour in that Station which God hath allotted to them. For Poverty is far from being any hinderance to Virtue: It rather helps to awaken Consideration, to cure Mens Fondness for the World, and create a sort of Indifference towards it; and this naturally makes way for serious Thoughts, and raises the Affections towards better and higher Things.

And certainly it lyes upon all such as are in these Circumstances, thankfully to comply with the gracious Designs of Providence: and, since they are not cumbred with the Cares of Life, (except only for meer Necessaries) nor much acquainted with its deceitful Pleasures, it behoves them to chuse that *good Part which shall not be taken away from them*, and to attend diligently upon the *one thing needful*, the important Business of Religion, and the Welfare of their Immortal Souls; And, as knowing that *the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him*, they should endeavour to treasure up Favour with him, and *lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come*; that so, how scanty soever these perishing things at present be, or how soon soever they may fail, *They may* at length *lay hold on eternal Life.*

Luke 10. 42.

Rom. 10. 12.

3. Another special Duty that the *Poor* owe to their Lord and Maker, is a firm Trust and Affiance in him. For the Straitness of their present Condition is no Argument that they are deserted or neglected of God; since he is nevertheless able to provide, and indeed hath effectually provided for that which is their true and only Happiness. Nay, he hath declar'd himself to be their Patron and Protector even in this World; and therefore of all things they ought not to cast away their Confidence in God, because they are destitute of other Helps: But they ought so much the rather to cast their whole Care upon him, and *in every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving to make their Requests known unto him*; not doubting but that He providently careth for them, and will either actually relieve their Wants and Miseries, or else make these appearing Evils to work together for their real Good, and minister to the increase of their Joy and Glory in the World to come.

Philip. 4. 6.

And now, on the other hand, I must take leave to give the *Rich* a few Hints of that Duty which they also owe to their Sovereign Lord and Maker.

1. One great Branch of which consists in an humble Acknowledgment, that He is the sole *Arbiter* and Disposer of their Fortunes;

tunes; that their Riches are the Gifts of his Providence; and that they have nothing but what they have receiv'd. This is what they ought to make themſelves throughly ſenſible of, the better to teſtifie their Thankfulneſs to God, the Fountain all Good, and to avoid thoſe Snares to which their Condition lyes moſt expos'd. That they may not be ſo vain as to *Sacrifice to their own Net*, and attribute their Proſperity to their own Induſtry, Contrivance, or Management: That they may not be apt to turn wanton, and forgetful of God, which is a Diſeaſe that the Surfeit of Plenty too often breeds: That they may not grow fondly enamour'd of the Gift, to the Diſhonour of the Giver; and Idolize the fine Gold, by ſetting their Heart upon it, and putting their Truſt in it. All which are dangerous Temptations, with which *the God of this World* will be endeavouring *to blind their Minds*, unleſs they keep up a conſtant Senſe of this very thing in their Thoughts, that it is *the living God that giveth them all things richly to enjoy*; that it is his *Bleſſing* that *maketh* truly *Rich*; and that without it Riches alone can yield no Enjoyment, no Contentment. Hab. 1. 16. 1 Tim. 5. 16.

2. Another Inſtance of Duty that the *Rich* owe to Him who made them what they are, is to be Exemplary in their Obedience to his moſt Holy Laws. For all the Wealth in the *Indies* can never purchaſe any Indulgence for Sin at God's Hand. And therefore the *Rich* muſt not preſume to think, that they are Men privileg'd, and ſet free from the Fetters of Religion; that they are not tied up by the Rules of Temperance and Chaſtity; that they are not oblig'd by the Law of Chriſtian Meekneſs and Forgiveneſs; that they are not bound to attend God's ſolemn Worſhip, and to *reverence* his *Sabbath* and his *Sanctuary*. For to allow themſelves in ſuch Thoughts, or to govern their Practice by ſuch corrupt Maxims as theſe, would be a moſt inſufferable Affront to the Majeſty of their great Creator, as well as abominable Ingratitude to their bountiful Benefactor. Whereas they indeed, of all Men, are under the greateſt Obligation to be Virtuous and Religious, becauſe they ſtand indebted for the largeſt Receipts unto God. And this Obligation is ſo much the ſtricter upon them, becauſe the Figure that they make, and the Sway that they bear in the World, adds a ſort of Authority to their Example; and they ſhould ſtudy to be very exact in their Behaviour and very exemplary in all Virtue, leſt, by living licentiouſly themſelves, they ſhould ſet Faſhions in Vice, as they do in other things, and draw the Multitude after them, who are always prone to imitate, eſpecially that which is Evil.

3. Another peculiar Head of Duty that is owing from the *Rich* to their liberal Creator, is what *Solomon* very ſignificantly calls *honouring the Lord with their Subſtance*, by dedicating ſome part of it to Pious and Charitable Uſes; that is in truth, by giving him of his Own, as the Rivers flow into the Sea from whence they ſprung. Prov. 3. 9.

And

And without all Queſtion, they who have taſted ſo largely of God's unenvied Bounty, ſhould hold themſelves more particularly oblig'd to pay their Tithes and Oblations punctually, (in which God hath an immediate Propriety, as being the ſettled Maintenance of his Miniſters) and to contribute, upon Occaſion, what may be farther needful towards the more honourable Support of the Miniſtry, and the more decent Performance of divine Worſhip: They ſhould hold themſelves oblig'd to be ready, to their Power, to help forward any good and uſeful Work, and to *deviſe liberal Things*, eſpecially for the Advancement of true Religion and Virtue, and the Encouragement of Induſtry and Honeſty among the Poorer ſort, whom God hath in a manner ſubſtituted to be his Receivers.

And therefore, ſince the Goodneſs of Man extendeth not unto God, ſince 'tis impoſſible to be in a proper Senſe beneficial to our Maker, They, whom he hath bleſs'd with Abundance, ſhould eſteem it their Privilege as well as Duty to lay hold on the Opportunity of making him their Debtor, by cheerfully lending unto him in the Perſon of the Poor, and beſtowing ſome Portion of his Gifts as he himſelf hath appointed. But this Part of their Duty will preſent it ſelf again under another View, whilſt I am conſidering the reciprocal Duty of *Rich* and *Poor*, one towards another, as Fellow-Creatures: Which I ſhall now do in very brief Hints, as not unregardful of your Patience.

1. And firſt for the *Poor*, one main Part of their relative Duty towards the *Rich*, is a modeſt Deference and humble Deportment, as towards thoſe whom the Almighty Providence hath placed in a ſuperiour Station. For ſince it is God's own Appointment, that ſome ſhould be Rich and ſome Poor, ſome High and ſome Low, that ſo, by a due Subordination, Government might be the better maintain'd, and the Ends of Society anſwer'd, no doubt This infers an Obligation upon thoſe of inferiour Degree, to keep their Rank, and obſerve *Decorum* in it; and not to look up with an evil and an envious Eye upon thoſe who are plac'd above them; much leſs to behave themſelves Rudely and Diſreſpectfully towards them, or to turn Refractory and Contumacious, becauſe ſuch diſorderly Behaviour would be an Act of Diſobedience againſt God, and a Reſiſtance of his Ordinance.

2. Another neceſſary Piece of Duty that the *Poor* are bound to pay to the *Rich*, is Honeſty and Diligence in their Vocation and Buſineſs. For ſince it hath not ſeem'd good to their Maker to beſtow much Plenty upon them, they ought to be content with his Allowance, and to accept it upon the Terms that he has given it them, even the Sweat of their own Brows. They muſt not dare to ſet up for their own Carvers, by filching and ſtealing, or any baſe or diſhoneſt way of Livelihood; they muſt not give themſelves up to Idleneſs, nor take to the wretched and wicked Trade of Begging; which is indeed to rob their wealthier Neighbours and the Publick of the uſeful help of thoſe Hands, which were made for Labour, and ought to be ſo employ'd.

But

But now again the *Rich* muſt not diſdain to be put in Mind, that they owe ſome ſort of Duty even to the *Poor*.

(1.) As firſt, Humanity, I reckon, and Tenderneſs is a Due, that they ought never to deny to the *Poor*. For they may, nay they muſt (without fear of leſſening themſelves by the Condeſcenſion) always conſider them as Brethren of the ſame common Nature with themſelves. And Human Nature, even in the meaneſt Guiſe, can never deſerve ſure to be thought contemptible by Any of its own Kind. It muſt be a very unnatural ſort of Pride to think it ſo, or to treat it as ſuch; to think and act, as if the meer Outſide and Trappings of a Man were what diſtinguiſh'd the *Species*, or rather created a new one; exalting the *Rich* into *little Gods*, and thruſting down the *Poor* into the Rank of vileſt *Beaſts or Creeping Things*.

A peice of Contempt This, which, beſides its being ſo highly injurious to our Fellow-Creatures, flies at laſt in the Face of God himſelf. *For He that deſpiſeth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker*; repreacheth the God that made him *Poor*, and could have made this proud Deſpiſer *Poor* too: nay, who can at any time bring the Statelieſt Mortal that is, low and even with the Duſt he treads on; and on the other hand often *raiſeth the Poor out of the Duſt, and lifteth up the Beggar from the Dunghill to ſet them among Princes*.——And This, not only to exerciſe his own Prerogative, but alſo to teach both *Rich* and *Poor*, that they are equally dependant upon Him; and that therefore no one ought to over-value himſelf on the Score of his Wealth, or deſpiſe and inſult Others that want, ſince the difference in their Condition is purely precarious, and at the Will of their Sovereign Lord and Maker. Prov. 17. 5. 1 Sam. 2. 8.

(2.) Another Duty that the *Rich* are bound to perform towards the *Poor*, is Juſtice; the Juſtice, I mean, of paying them the deſerved Hire of their Labour, and rewarding their honeſt Induſtry. And, this ſort of Juſtice is ſo much the more ſtrictly a Due, becauſe Injuſtice in this Caſe would be downright Cruelty and Barbarity. For what is it leſs to defraud or oppreſs thoſe poor Souls whom Providence it ſelf hath ſufficiently ſtraitned; not ſuffering them to get even an hard Living by the Sweat of their Brows, but moſt unmercifully forcing them both to ſweat and to ſtarve?

And this kind of Practice, barbarous as it is in it ſelf, ſo it implies a very heinous Reflection upon God's Honour: For *He* alſo *that oppreſſeth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker*; as who ſhould ſeem to think, that God hath left the *Poor* both unprovided for and unprotected; and that he made them for no other End, but to be very Slaves and Beaſts of Burden to the *Rich*. But this is certainly a crying Provocation that will be heard and anſwer'd with a Vengeance one Day: For *Behold* (ſaith St. *James*, *ch. 5. v. 4.*) *the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped, have entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.* Prov. 14. 13.

(3) The

(3.) The laſt Duty owing from the *Rich* to the *Poor*, that I ſhall now inſiſt on, is (what I made mention of before) Charity. For though the *Poor* have no legal Demand upon the *Rich*, for that which is purely their free Benevolence, yet they have a Right that is Superiour and antecedent to all Human Conſtitutions: For they claim under God, who is the Supream Lord and Proprietor of the Univerſe, and hath purpoſely ſo ſhared his own Diſtributions, that the Abundance of ſome might be a Supplement to the Want of others.

And, in ſtrictneſs of ſpeaking, the Man, that in the Vogue of the World paſſes for a Maſter of many Thouſands, is not the proper Owner of what he hath; He is only God's Steward: and the larger Eſtate he hath to manage, ſo much the greater is his Truſt and Care in the Family; and he ought accordingly to give to every one their *Portion*, in due *Seaſon*, and in full *Meaſure*: Which if he neglects to do, he is guilty of foul Ingratitude as well as Diſobedience to his Lord, and manifeſt Wrong to his Fellow-Creatures, over whom he is made a kind of *Ruler*. In Diſcharge of which honourable Truſt, he ought to be both faithful and wiſe; faithful in beſtowing his Alms according to his Abundance, giving a *Portion to ſeven and alſo to eight*, (nay to 50, to 100, to more if he can) *as not knowing what evil ſhall be upon the earth:* and wiſe in ſo contriving and managing his Charity, as may make it truly uſeful and beneficial, and, as far as is poſſible, (like our Saviour's Miracles, which were alſo Works of greateſt Mercy) Salutary at once both to Soul and Body. "He ſhould take Care, not only to fortifie and "cloath the Bodies of his needy Brethren with convenient Food and "Raiment, but he ſhould contribute what he can to relieve their "Spiritual Wants; to ſupply them with *the Bread of Life that is "from Heaven*; *to cloath them* (as the Prophet *Iſaiah* expreſſeth it) "*with the Garments of Salvation*; to lend Eyes to their blind "Underſtandings, and Feet to their lame Wills; to faſhion their "Manners aright at firſt, or to bring them again to their true Beat "whilſt they are yet flexible; to keep them *from turning aſide into "crooked Paths*, and to *lead them in the Way everlaſting*. Eccleſiaſt. 11. 2.

III. And, whilſt I am mentioning theſe things, I doubt not but you already perceive where my *Application* will properly fall in. You cannot indeed but have the Satisfaction to perceive, that the Proviſion of late Years made among your ſelves, for the Education of ſuch *Poor* Children as are deſtitute of their Parents Care or Help in this Particular, is that ſame faithful and diſcreet, that uſeful and excellent ſort of Charity, which I have been deſcribing, but need not recommend to you.

And yet it may be fit to take ſome ſhort Survey of this your Charity, that, by the *ſhining Light* it gives, Others may be enabled to diſcern the Comelineſs and Beauty of ſuch *good Works*, and incited to *glorifie* God, not only by more abundant Thankſgivings to him, but by additional Supplies to perfect ſo laudable and extenſive

a Deſign. And that the Deſign may appear to be in a good forward way of advancing, you can already take upon you to ſay, that, in and about theſe Cities of *London* and *Weſtminſter*, there are more than 3000 Children, of both Sexes, under the Chriſtian Care and Tuition of the ſeveral Undertakers, Managers, and Promoters of this well-plac'd Charity: And all theſe Children are provided for and ſupplied, in ſome competent Degree, ſuch as is beſt ſuited to their Needs both of Soul and Body; the chief Regard being ſtill had to their better and their nobler Part.

Some of them are not only taught and clad, but entirely maintain'd; partly by Subſcriptions and Collections, and Gifts and Legacies from well-diſpos'd Perſons, and partly too by the Contribution (as I may ſo call it) of their own proper Hands: For, where there is Convenience, or Stock ſufficient for it, they are train'd up to Work; which is no unprofitable Piece of Learning, conſidering that an early Habit of Idleneſs is the common Bane of Thoſe, who cannot honeſtly hope to ſupport Life otherwiſe than by their Labour.

Many amongſt them, ſuch as are beſt capable, are taught to write legibly, and caſt Accounts tolerably; and thereby the better fitted for any future Employment or Vocation, to which alſo They are timely apply'd, where the Fund is large enough to afford it.

All, or moſt of them in the mean while are modeſtly and plainly, but neatly apparell'd, or at leaſt they wear ſome becoming Badge of their Benefactour's Bounty; which ſerves too to diſtinguiſh them from the unnurtur'd Crew, that lurk about the Streets, either to Beg, or to Steal.

But whereinſoever they fall ſhort, they are All ſure to be very carefully inſtructed in the Fundamentals of the Chriſtian Religion, according to that Form of ſound Words compriz'd in the Church-Catechiſm; by ſome familiar Expoſition of which they are made acquainted with the chief Heads both of Faith and Practice: and at the ſame time they have the Precepts of Virtue frequently inculcated upon them, and the oppoſite Vices (ſuch eſpecially as are moſt incident to Youth) noted with ſome Mark of Diſgrace, and forbidden under a ſevere Penalty; that ſo, by this wholeſome Inſtruction and Diſcipline, they may learn in the whole Courſe of their Lives to chuſe and cleave to that which is Good, and to abhor that which is Evil.

The Improvement One would chiefly wiſh, in an Undertaking ſo well-concerted and ſo far advanc'd, is, that, as it ſhall pleaſe God to enlarge Mens Hearts, your Funds may grow proportionably, 'till they may ſuffice to keep *all* the Children employ'd at Work, whilſt they remain with you; and afterwards, to place them out to Apprenticeſhip in ſome honeſt Trade or Occupation: that ſo, as They have been enur'd to Induſtry from the Beginning, they may be put into a Capacity of getting a future Subſiſtance, and of making the right Uſe, and reaping the whole Benefit of the good Education that hath been beſtow'd upon them. And

And I am firmly perſuaded, that, thro' God's Bleſſing, you will never want freſh and perpetual *Springs*, to feed and ſwell theſe enlivening *Streams*, that do already *make glad* ſo many of our Towns and Cities, and promiſe ſuch Abundance of good Fruit of various Kinds.

For it is a Charity This, of the largeſt, the nobleſt, and moſt beneficial Influence. It is highly beneficial in the firſt Place to the poor Children themſelves, who by this means are opportunely preſerv'd from the Contagion of ill Example, and that Corruption of Manners which too generally prevails; and are favourably propoſſeſs'd (whilſt their Minds are yet undebauch'd) with a Senſe of Religion, and ſome Reliſh of Virtue and Goodneſs.

It is (or may be) no leſs beneficial to their Parents, who, if they have but the Heart to make uſe of it, have the happy Opportunity put into their Hands, of becoming Scholars and Converts even to their own Children.

It is beneficial to all thoſe Perſons, to whom theſe Children may happen to bear any Relation afterwards, either in the Service of a Family, or at the Head of it, becauſe they will have been accuſtom'd to good Order from their Youth up, and thoroughly inſtructed to make a Conſcience of doing their Duty, in that State of Life to which it ſhall pleaſe God to call them.

It is beneficial to the Publick, by diſpoſing thoſe to be uſeful and helpful Members in the Commonwealth, who moſt probably otherwiſe would have been at beſt unſerviceable, if not hurtful and pernicious.

It is beneficial to the Church, by removing ſome part of the Filth and Scandal that would otherwiſe lye at her Door, in defiance of her much weaken'd and deſpiſed Diſcipline, to the foul Diſgrace of our Chriſtian Profeſſion, and the great Decay of Piety and all Morality.

It is likely, in the laſt Place, to prove beneficial even to our late Poſterity. For tho' Reformation be a Work that muſt go heavily on, where the Churches Cenſures are the Libertine's Scorn, and the Magiſtrates Axe is not a ſufficient Terror to the harden'd Sinner, yet the bringing up of Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, who would otherwiſe have been caſt out as the Off-ſcouring and Refuſe of the World, may probably put ſome Stop to the Propagation and Encreaſe of Wickedneſs, and cauſe the Generation that is next growing up, to grow ſome little better: And This may reaſonably induce thoſe that follow after, to purſue the ſame hopeful Method; which by degrees may mend the face of things, and make Virtue once more to revive and flouriſh even amongſt This degenerate People.

But why do I ſpend Words to ſet forth the Uſefulneſs and Excellency of a Charity, that may much more eaſily be conceiv'd, than it can be worthily expreſs'd? Eſpecially, ſince you have a ſenſible Demonſtration

monſtration of it before your Eyes, that perſuades at once more forcibly and more winningly, than any kind of Artificial Arguments, or any Words I could invent: I mean the very Objects of your Charity. Theſe young and tender Plants, who, by your good Cultivation and timely Watering, are growing up *in Grace and the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, and are in a fair way to bring forth Fruit unto Holineſs.

I appeal to your ſelves and your own Sentiments of the thing, (nay I might appeal to the moſt careleſs Auditor here preſent, or the moſt unconcern'd Spectator of this Day's humble Proceſſion) Is it not a goodly ſight, to ſee theſe *Poor* Children reſtor'd as it were to Human Shape by your Care? And is not the decent Appearance they now make, together with You in the Houſe of God, a ſeaſonable *Memento*, that God is the Maker of them as well as you? and that they are made with the ſame Curioſity of Workmanſhip, and equally capable (and therefore equally worthy) of the ſame Improvements in Chriſtian Knowledge and Virtue with your ſelves?

And is it not a melodious Sound in your Ears, to hear them on Occaſion, as a Proof of their Proficiency, rendring an account of their Chriſtian Faith; and praying with you and for you; and praiſing God in Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Riches of his Grace, of the outward Means of which they alſo are made Partakers through your Liberality?

And is it not a Reflection that yields you much inward Complacency, that God hath inclin'd your Hearts, to be in the ſtead of Foſter-Fathers to theſe expoſed *Innocents*; to take them up when they were in Danger of periſhing; to reſcue them out of the Hands of Ignorance, Rudeneſs, and Vice; to be their Inſtructors in Chriſt; to dedicate them betimes to his Service, and teach them to ſerve him both with Underſtanding and Affection?

And is it not a very encouraging Motive to the Exerciſe of this ſort of Charity, that whoſoever is thus inſtrumental in *converting Sinners from the Error of their Ways*, or *keeping* neglected Youth *from the Paths of the Deſtroyer*, ſhall *ſave* many *Souls from Death*, and *hide multitudes of Sins*; Sins that would otherwiſe be deriv'd down from Father to Son in too certain and conſtant a Succeſſion?

And as the Proſpect of advancing God's Glory, and procuring ſo much Good to Mankind is, I queſtion not, a very powerful Incitement with You, to abound ſtill more and more in this Labour of Love, ſo, I ſhould hope too, it may be ſufficient, to provoke all thoſe that have any Spark of godly Zeal, any Chriſtian Sympathy, any kind of generous Paſſions in their Breaſts, to put their helping Hand to this bleſſed Work, and ſtrive together with you for the Honour of the Goſpel, and for the Recovery of thoſe *little Ones*, who are *ſcatter'd* (alas!) almoſt every where, *like Sheep without a Shepherd*, altho' *it is not the Will of our heavenly Father, that One of them ſhould periſh.*

And

And O that the Number of the Fellow-helpers in this neceſſary Work might daily encreaſe! O that it might be a growing Emulation among Chriſtians, thus to approve themſelves the zealous and paſſionate Lovers of Souls! Were there never ſo many ingag'd in this noble Striſe, there would be Room for them All to excell; nay, and Room for All to receive the Prize too, and to become Joint-Sharers in the *ſame Hope and Joy*, and *Crown of Rejoycing*. And, when the *Rich* and *Poor* ſhall meet together at laſt, before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, and a particular Inquiſition ſhall be made after Works of Mercy, then (may we piouſly preſume) ſhall theſe very *little Ones* appear, and chearfully teſtifie on behalf of their Benefactors: " We were an hungred, and They fed us; We were naked, " and They have cloathed us; We were ignorant, and They have in- " ſtructed us; We were baſe and vile, and They have refined us; We " were in a manner forſaken and loſt, and they have gathered us up, " and reſtor'd us even into thine Hands, O Lord, that art the Shep- " herd and Biſhop of our Souls! And then ſhall the Merciful Judge, inaſmuch as they have done thus to the *leaſt of theſe his Brethren*, moſt graciouſly accept, impute, and reward it as done to himſelf. Then ſhall he richly recompence his own Gifts, in the meaneſt Services of thoſe that have cared for the Souls of the *Poor*; and thenceforward ſhall ſuch *wiſe Teachers* as have *turned many to Righteouſneſs, ſhine forth as the brightneſs of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever*: And the More they are, the brighter will they ſhine, and reflect the greater Luſtre on each other, *to the praiſe of the Glory of Gods Grace, wherein they are accepted in the Beloved*. Amen.

Now to Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons and one God, be aſcrib'd, as is moſt due, all Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen.

FINIS.